## **PROPOSITIONS**

AND

# RESOLUTIONS

OF A

## Provisional Meeting

OF

DELEGATES FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE KINGDOM,

HELD IN MANCHESTER, BY SUCCESSIVE
ADJOURNMENTS FROM APRIL 20TH TO APRIL 23RD, 1835, FOR THE
PURPOSE OF DEVISING SOME EFFICIENT REMEDY FOR
EXISTING ABUSES IN WESLEYAN METHODISM.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

## AN ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CONNEXION.

### **MANCHESTER:**

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# ADDRESS, &c.

No one concerned for the vital interests of Christianity, can be indifferent to the deep and thorough agitation which at present pervades the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Not only have its combined operations been considerably deranged and interrupted, but its very existence, as a whole, has been placed in the utmost peril. Had that peril been occasioned by the infraction of salutary and long established regulations, or the subversion of legitimate discipline, by factious innovators and rash adventurers, the judicious and pious part of its community might justly neglect their arguments, and refuse co-operation. The conflict, however, has already been so long protracted, and even still abates nothing of its strenuous and determined character, that sufficient opportunity has been afforded to every one who regards the interests of Wesleyan Methodism as deserving of his attention, to form a correct estimate of the questions at issue, and the manner in which the conflict has hitherto been conducted.

After long and extensive correspondence with many of the oldest, most judicious, and best friends of Wesleyan Methodism, the present conjuncture has been thought to be so momentous as to demand united counsel respecting what measures are necessary to arrest the progress of disorganization. This desirable object has been thought to be best attainable by endeavouring to rectify those abuses which have crept into the system by the exercise of irresponsible power; and by adopting such principles of church government as are in accordance with the New Testament, the spirit and practice of primitive Christianity, and of primitive Methodism.

With this view the Committee of the Wesleyan Central Association thought it their duty to invite their brethren from various parts of the kingdom, to attend a general meeting in Manchester. This invitation the society promptly responded to, and sent a large number of Delegates; who, having taken into their prayerful

consideration the exigencies of the case, now present the results of their deliberations to the Connexion at large. In doing so they beg that the above meeting, however, may be regarded merely as a provisional one; the propositions and resolutions there adopted remaining open to the consideration of the societies at large, as subjects on which a future meeting of Delegates will have finally to decide. By this means they hope to elicit such additional information as may enable them so to modify, if necessary, their resolutions, as to carry along with them the approbation of the great body of the people, in order to lay a solid foundation for lasting peace and uninterrupted prosperity.

Whilst, however, they thus distinctly announce their purpose, the assembled Delegates take this opportunity of disavowing in the most solemn manner, a sentiment assiduously propagated by their opponents against the Wesleyan Association, and pertinaciously adhered to in despite of every remonstrance to the contrary: that the persons who now seek a removal of abuses in Methodism are only meditating and concerting measures of separation. they again, and again, most solemnly deny. If this were their design, what could hinder its immediate execution, on one of the largest scales the Christian world ever witnessed? What can furnish a more cogent proof of the falsehood of this insinuation, than the patience and forbearance which the tens of thousands who compose their Association are daily manifesting, in the face of affronts the most insulting, and provocations the most unmerited. Still have they persisted to adhere to the old Connexion, however urged and goaded, in many instances by those far their juniors, to depart. Their reluctance to quit arises from a conscientious desire to be the conservatives of every thing valuable in original Methodism :—a consideration which seems to have but little weight in the minds of those who, having substituted modern usages in place of ancient rules, have brought our entire economy to the very verge of ruin. appeal to the uniform conduct of the Association as a sufficient proof of the sincerity of their profession, and as a complete refutation of the calumny of their opponents.

Maintaining, as they do, the most sincere affection for the Wesleyan body at large, and an earnest desire to uphold its institutions, the members of the Delegation assure the Connexion, that whilst they have been constrained to seek protection in the Association against the harsh and unconstitutional proceedings of many of the Travelling Preachers,

they deprecate the infringement of any ministerial right or privilege. so far as the same can be maintained by reference to the New Testament and to the character and conduct of Christ and his Apostles. Far be it from the advocates of Christian liberty, to wish to see Christian Ministers deprived of that Scriptural—that honourable independence by which as men, and especially as Ambassadors of Christ, they may be protected in the enjoyment of their temporal rights, whilst they faithfully and fearlessly declare the "whole counsel of God." Nothing is farther from the hearts of those who denounce tyranny and oppression over the people, than to evince the same spirit towards the Preachers: tyranny is equally hateful in The members of this meeting will yield to none in affectionate concern for promoting the comfort and happiness of those who "labour in the word and doctrine;" and are persuaded that no confidence reposed in them, by those who faithfully minister in "spiritual things," will be found to have been misplaced; but that a grateful and affectionate people will ever feel it to be equally a duty and a privilege, "to minister unto them in carnal things."

An unhappy want of confidence on the part of the Preachers in the affections and integrity of the people, has been one principal occasion of distance and disaffection between them. mutual confidence, on the ground of mutual rights and privileges equally respected, will create a bond of indissoluble union; and one concentrated harmonious co-operation will achieve more glorious triumphs in furtherance of our common Christianity, than have ever yet been witnessed upon earth.—How, on the contrary, is it possible that Methodism, as at present administered, can much longer be endured? How can peace and good understanding be preserved, in the face of treaties the most solemn, first confirmed by the Preachers in behalf of the people's rights, and then by the Preachers violated? How can order be maintained, and good government carried on throughout our extensive Connexion, when Rules and Regulations rendered ambiguous-whether by design or accident-furnish occasions of endless dispute as to their import? Who that rightly values liberty, the inalienable birthright of every human being, can surrender it to the claims of arbitrary and irresponsible power? conceivable that enlightened persons, already members of our society, can much longer endure such arrogant pretensions; or that discerning individuals will consent to associate themselves in such a fraternity, while such abuses exist? These are grievances of which the Connexion cannot but justly and loudly complain, and imperatively demand a redress; in order that they may prosecute the remainder of their Christian journey without further annoyance, and hand down to posterity an imperishable memorial of the wisdom, the piety, and the resolution of the Methodists of the present day, in asserting that liberty wherewith Jesus Christ hath made his disciples free.

The existence of an Association of Wesleyan Methodists, organized, and already so extensively ramified, is a subject of the highest congratulation to every one who is anxious to preserve the unity of the body during the continuance of the present conflict. protection what would have become of the thousands who now happily enjoy Christian communion with each other, exactly on the same principles as those which first united them; included, indeed, within a temporary inclosure contiguous to their former position, but ready at the first moment of concession and accommodation on the part of their offending brethren, to constitute, as formerly, one common fold. By means of the Association such a medium is at hand for the expression of public opinion, on the subject of Methodistical grievances, as was long ago desired, but desired in vain. All that is now necessary to the accomplishment of a salutary, safe, and speedy redress is, a discreet and temperate, but firm avowal of the resolution of the great body of Wesleyan Methodists to be satisfied with nothing short of a thorough reformation of abuses. Hesitation and delay are now almost the only danger. A prompt and general union of the members, for the attainment of this important object, cannot fail to bring the present unhappy disputes to a speedy termination. A protracted conflict must of necessity be attended with disastrous consequences! Nothing but a criminal indifference to the question, whether the members of the Wesleyan Societies shall be governed by a despotic and irresponsible power, can suffer such language to be uttered by a combination of the preachers, as that which has lately been circulated by them, -that whatever may transpire, they are determined never to yield, to the remonstrances of the people. Such language will prove to be as unavailing as it is unchristian, against the tide of public opinion, and the unremitting efforts of a people enlightened by the principles of truth and justice, and supported by the consciousness of Christian integrity.

In conclusion, it now only remains to entreat the Brethren throughout the Wesleyan Connexion, in behalf of their Christian

liberties, from an honourable sense of what is due to themselves, and to posterity; from their anxiety to perpetuate the valuable institutions of Wesleyan Methodism; from a generous consideration of the personal inconvenience, hardship, and even peril which have been cheerfully incurred by those individuals who, for the recovery of the lost liberties of the Connexion, first threw themselves into the breach; by every thing which is dear to them as Methodists, as Christians, as Britons, not to allow themselves to be lulled into lethargical indifference, till the most propitious moment for regaining their Christian freedom shall have passed away. Negligence to improve the present auspicious concurrence of events; to facilitate the achievement of one of the most glorious triumphs of primitive Christianity over deteriorated Methodism, may leave them long to deplore that tardiness to act with their brethren, by which thousands, and tens of thousands of members, may be cut off from the body; whilst those who remain will become the mere passive instruments of a few combined preachers in the Conference, and a few rich men out of it, till the spirit of Christian liberty, and of genuine piety, shall have been bartered for a lifeless, though imposing formality; and what otherwise might have diffused spiritual life and energy throughout the whole mass of human kind, shall become as "salt which has lost its savour, and is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under-foot of men."

## PROPOSITIONS, &c.

AT A PROVISIONAL MEETING of Wesleyan Delegates from various circuits and places in the kingdom, convened by public advertisement of the Central Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and held at Manchester by adjourned sittings from the 20th to the 23rd day of April, 1835, for the purpose of deliberating upon the grievances which have lately oppressed and disturbed the Methodist Body, with the view of devising measures of redress based upon a reformation of the Methodist Church:

George Cookman, Esq., of Hull, having been unanimously called to the chair; Mr. William Wood, and Mr. R. B. Grindrod, of Manchester, and Mr. John Wood, of Liverpool, having been appointed secretaries to the meeting:

And it having been ascertained that the following Delegates and members of the Central Committee of the Association were present as members of the meeting, viz.—

### DELEGATES.

## Those marked \* are not official.

Bolton Mr. Thomas Ormerod.	Clitheroe Mr. John Broadley
Barnsley Mesrs. James Edgar,	Dudley Rev. John Gordon, and
Joseph Woodroffe, and	Mr. Slocombe.
John Taylor.	Dublin Mr. David Lambert. *
Dames T. T. T.	David Lambert. "
Bury Jas. Livesey, Esq., and	Darlington Charles Parker, Esq.
Messrs. J. R. Kaye, and	Glossop Mr. James Hall.
S. Lord.	Glasgow Mr. William Gilfillan.
Blackburn Mr. — Stephenson.	Hull George Cookman, Esq.,
Birmingham Mr. William Lilly.	and Mr. Wm. Sissison.
Bradford M. Til.	and MI. Whi. Sissisum.
Bradford Mr. Thomas Watkins	Heywood Messrs. Thomas Nield
Burnley Messrs. Thomas Wilkin-	and James Wright.
son, Peter Lord, Wm.	KeighleyMr. Joseph Blythman.
Ince, and Peter Law.	Lynn Mr. George Franklin.
Caminal famous Mr. Committe	Tymore
Carrickfergus .Mr. Samuel Hay.*	Liverpool, N Mr. Richard Farrer.
Carlisle Mr. T. J. Cox.	Liverpool, S Mr. Coulthurst.

Lane End Mr. Edwin Bate.	Rochdale	Messrs. Thomas Booth,
London Messrs. Robert E		Stephen Broad, Samuel
and Joshua Nettl		Heape, John Howard,
		John Petrie, and James
Leeds Messrs. James Si		
Protestant Matthew Johnson	1, G. 1C 1	Hoyle, Esq.
Protestant Methodists J. Mallinson, and	Salfora	Messrs. Thomas Barlow,
Methodists John Yewdall.		William Matthews, and
Macclesfield Mr. Samuel Woo		William Procter.
Manchester Messrs. George H		Mr. Thomas Wilson.
and W. T. Heske		Mr. Rd. Brightman.
Branch of	Stourbridge	Mr. — Haynes.
Protestant Mr. J. Wolstenho	olme. Stockport	William Smith, Esq.,
Methodists ]		Messrs.Geo. Rawlinson,
Northwich Messrs. John Th	omp-	John Wittingham, and
son, William Wa		David Brook.*
and John Sutton		Mr. George Turton.
Nantwich H. M. Bunbury,		Trent Mr. Edwin Bate.
Messrs. Richard I		Messrs. Joshua Fielden.
and George Robi		John Hill, Wm. Slater,
New Mills Messrs. John Be		Eli Sutcliffe, and Wm.
and Thomas Wal		Thompson.
		Mr. William Redstone.
Oldham Messrs.Frederick		
son, William Kno		Mr. Daniel Douglas.
George Jaquiss.		Mr. Thomas Hughes.
Preston Messrs. Joseph P		Mr. John Lister.
and John Johnst	one.   York	Mr. Josiah Worrall.
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## MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

## MANCHESTER.

Mr. Joseph Brooke, Mr. Thomas Lucas, Mr. Thomas Taylor,	Mr. William Jones, Mr. Jabez Sanderson, Mr. Robert Lowe,	Mr. John Greenhalgh, Mr. Matthew Thackray, Mr. Adam Cottam.	
LIVERPOOL.			
Mr. David Rowland, Mr. John Beynon, Mr. James Pearson, Mr. John Gleave, Mr. Wilson Ledger,	Mr. Charles Cole, Mr. John Bridson, Mr. Richard Widdows, Mr. John Stephenson, Mr. James Martin,	Mr. William Morgan, Mr. John Stoward, Mr. John Norris, Mr. William Johnson, Mr. Joseph Hiles.	

## WESLEYAN MINISTERS.

Rev. Dr. Warren, Manchester. Rev. Robert Emmett, Yarm. Rev. James Lamb, Dublin.

Letters, in substitution for Delegates, were received from the following circuits and places.

Cleckheaton,	Durham,
Camelford,	Diss,
Chorley,	Edinburgh,
Colne,	Guernsey,
Derby,	Helstone,
	Camelford, Chorley, Colne,

Houghton, Lostwithel, Cornwall Malton, Market Raisen, Newark, New Basford, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Partington, Ramsey, Isle of Man, St. Austel, Cornwall, Sunderland, Shrewsbury, South Shields, Selby, Wallsend, Worcester, Whitby, Worksop.

It was moved by Mr. Matthew Johnson; seconded by Mr. William Wood; and

RESOLVED,

That the business upon which this meeting is now about to enter be conducted in the fear and as in the presence of God, with a solemnity suitable to its serious and important nature.

Mr. Matthew Johnson, of Leeds, one of the representatives of the body of Wesleyan Protestant Methodists, having made to the meeting the following declaration, viz.—That the Wesleyan Protestant Methodists are prepared to abide by the decision of this meeting on the subject of a reform in Conference Methodism, provided it be based upon New Testament principles: And further, that in the event of the Conference granting concessions upon those principles, they would be prepared to return to the bosom of the Methodist Connexion:—

It was moved by Mr. John Wood; seconded by Mr. R. B. Grindrod; and

RESOLVED,

That the arrangement entered into between the Central Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and the body of Wesleyan Protestant Methodists, with the view of effecting a union of the two parties, is now confirmed by this meeting; upon the understanding expressed in the Declaration now submitted by Mr. Matthew Johnson, on behalf of himself and co-representatives of the said body to this meeting.

A deputation from the society of Wesleyan Methodists in Oldham (who separated in consequence of the proceedings in the case of the Rev. J. R. Stephens), having applied to the meeting with a proposal to unite themselves with the Delegates and the Association, upon the same arrangement and conditions as those entered into and agreed upon in the case of the Wesleyan Protestant Brethren:—

It was moved by Mr. R. B. Grindrod; seconded Mr. Thomas Taylor; and

RESOLVED,

That the proposition of the Oldham friends is now accordingly, and upon the terms specified, acceded to by this meeting; and that they therefore constitute a branch of the Association, and are entitled to be represented in this meeting.

The meeting having had laid before it detailed accounts and histories of sundry popular grievances and evils, the result of an undue assumption and exercise of power on the part of the Conference and its representatives:—

It was moved by H. M. Bunbury, Esq.; seconded by Mr. Richard Farrer; and

RESOLVED,

That this Meeting having heard with great pain and regret the several instances of arbitrary and unscriptural conduct on the part of Preachers individually, of District Meetings, and the Conference, which have now been detailed, most deeply deplores the afflictive state of things thereby shewn to exist; and feels called upon, in duty to itself and to the brethren throughout the Connexion, to proceed now to the adoption of measures calculated to avert a recurrence of similar evils in future.

It was moved by the Rev. John Gordon; seconded by Mr. Matthew Johnson; and

RESOLVED,

GENERAL PRINCIPLE.

That the basis of a plan for a reformation of existing abuses in Methodism, shall be the principle of the right of interference on the part of the members of the church, in the regulation of all its affairs.

#### PROPOSITION I. \*

That leaders' meetings be composed, as usual, of the stewards and leaders of each separate society; local preachers' meetings, of all the local preachers of the circuit; quarterly meetings, of the stewards, leaders, local preachers, and trustees of the Circuit; the itinerant preachers having a voice in all such meetings, and the superintendent preacher being ex officio president of the same; but should

<sup>\*</sup> To preserve the propositions in the above more convenient order, it was thought unimportant to omit the names of the several movers and seconders.

any superintendent refuse to put to the vote any resolutions regularly proposed, then the meeting shall have the authority to appoint another person to be, for that time, the chairman of the meeting.

#### PROPOSITION II.

That leaders' meetings have authority to transact all business connected with the societies to which they belong; local preachers' meetings to manage, as usual, all matters relating immediately to the work and office of local preachers; and quarterly meetings to have the control of all the affairs of the circuit.

#### PROPOSITION III.

That all our rules be based upon the principle that we exist as a Connexion for purposes purely religious; that they be published for the information of the whole body, their meaning being first unequivocally defined; and that no rule or regulation be considered binding upon the Connexion until it have received the approbation of a majority of the societies, through the medium of their respective quarterly meetings.

#### PROPOSITION IV.

That the discipline of each circuit be administered by its own local authorities; an appeal lying from the leaders' and local preachers' meetings to the quarterly meetings, whose decision, without the interference of either district meeting or Conference, shall be final.

#### PROPOSITION V.

That unrestricted discussion on all subjects affecting the interests of the body be allowed in all our official meetings, every question being decided by the majority.

#### PROPOSITION VI.

That the members of society by means of the leaders, in conjunction with the other officers of the circuit, be represented in all district meetings, and in Conference, according to some equitable plan of lay delegation to be adjusted between the preachers and the delegates at the approaching Conference to be held in Sheffield.

### PROPOSITION VII.

That the management of the financial affairs of the Connexion be placed exclusively in the hands of laymen, so as to disencumber the ministerial office from the burthen of secular matters.

#### PROPOSITION VIII.

That as there are many members of society sincerely attached to Methodism, who most decidedly object to the establishment of the Theological Institution, and who, from the opinions they entertain thereon, conceive that the character of our ministry will thereby be injuriously altered, and the pecuniary resources of the

Connexion diminished; and as it is obvious from the past prosperity of Methodism, without such an institution, that it is not indispensable; the Conference should therefore consent, rather than hazard a division of the Connexion, to give up the Theological Institution forthwith.

#### PROPOSITION IX.

That the Rev. Dr. Warren, and the various officers and members who have been suspended, or expelled for their conscientious opposition to the Theological Institution, or have left the Society in consequence of the unjust and unconstitutional treatment they, or their brethren, have received since the Conference of 1827, be reinstated in the respective situations which they had previously occupied.

It was moved by Mr. Richard Farrer; seconded by Mr. John Nettleton; and

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this meeting, that a code of regulations for the government of the Methodist Connexion, framed upon the principles of the foregoing propositions, would restore the societies to a state of peace and confidence; but as that subject will be entered into at the approaching session of Conference,—that it be recommended to the Quarterly Meetings in the mean time, to propose addresses to Conference founded upon the Declaration of the London Trustees, in so far as the said Declaration is in accordance with the principles alluded to.

There having been introduced to the attention of the meeting an edition of the "Rules of Society" published in 1800, containing the word "majority" in explanation of the usage then prevalent in taking the sense of a Leaders' Meeting on the expulsion of a member or officer:—

It was moved by Mr. Thos. Wilson; seconded by Mr. John Nettleton; and

RESOLVED,

That the said edition of the Rules of Society be reprinted, with the names of a suitable number of members of this meeting affixed thereto, in attestation of the same being a true copy of the original collated by them; and that the reprint be immediately circulated for the information of the public. It was moved by Charles Parker, Esq.; seconded by William Smith, Esq.; and

RESOLVED,

That the Central Committee of the Manchester and Liverpool Association be requested to send out competent and judicious persons into various parts of the kingdom, to lecture on the objects of the Association; such persons being first particularly requested to avoid all harsh and unkind expressions when obliged to animadvert upon the official conduct of any of the Preachers.

It was moved by H. M. Bunbury, Esq.; seconded by Mr. Sissison; and

RESOLVED,

That this Provisional Meeting of Delegates be adjourned until the approaching session of Conference. That the Delegates be then summoned by advertisement of the Central Committee of the Association, announcing the time and place of meeting; and that every circuit or Branch Association be respectively requested to depute, as its representatives thereto, not more than two Delegates from each place.

It was moved by Charles Parker, Esq.; seconded by Mr. John Nettleton; and

RESOLVED.

That the thanks of the meeting are especially due to the Rev. Samuel Warren, LL. D., and to the chairmen and members of the Manchester and Liverpool Central Committee of the Association, for the noble efforts they have made under circumstances of great personal sacrifice, to promote the cause of Methodistical Reform.

It was moved by Charles Parker, Esq.; seconded by Mr. Sissison; and

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this meeting are due to the Conductors of the Christian Advocate Newspaper; for the able manner in which they have illustrated and defended the great principles of Religious Liberty; and particularly for their efficient services in advocating the objects of the Association.

It was moved by Mr. John Greenhalgh; seconded by Mr. Thomas Taylor; and

RESOLVED,

That the very cordial thanks of this meeting be presented to Charles Parker, Esq., for the able assistance he has given to its important deliberations, and more especially for his very Christian conduct and efficient services as chairman of the public meetings.

It was moved by Mr. John Wood; seconded by Mr. Thomas Taylor;

RESOLVED.

That the thanks of this meeting be offered to those warm friends of Religious Liberty whose spontaneous contributions towards the liquidation of the legal expenses of the late appeal of Dr. Warren to the Court of Chancery, have been transmitted to the treasurer through the medium of the Delegates.

It was moved by Mr. Thomas Wilkinson; seconded by H. M. Bunbury, Esq.; and

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this meeting are especially due to the friends who have kindly entertained the Delegates during their attendance on the present business.

It was moved by the Rev. Dr. Warren; seconded by Mr. Greenhalgh; and

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this meeting be respectfully presented to the Rev. Mr. Beardsall, minister, and to the Deacons of this chapel, for their kindness in offering the use thereof for the transaction of the present business.

It was moved by William Smith, Esq.; seconded by Charles Parker, Esq.; and

RESOLVED,

That the cordial thanks of this meeting be respectfully tendered to George Cookman, Esq., for his kindness in undertaking the protracted duties of the chair, and for the impartial and truly Christian manner in which he has presided over the business of the Delegation. It was moved by Mr. Haynes; seconded by Charles Parker, Esq.; and

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. William Wood, Mr. R. B. Grindrod, and Mr. John Wood, for their assiduous attentions as secretaries to the Delegation.

Signed

On behalf of the Meeting,

GEORGE COOKMAN, .... Chairman.

WILLIAM WOOD, R. B. GRINDROD, Secretaries. John Wood,

Manchester, 23rd April, 1835.

J. Thompson, Printer, 30, New Cannon-street, Manchester.